

ANNFIELD PLAIN

*Urban District Council.*

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MEDICAL OFFICER'S  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

*FOR 1897.*

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# MEDICAL OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT

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Stanley, February 10th, 1898.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present you with my Report, giving the amount of sickness from Zymotic Diseases, Vital Statistics, and some account of the sanitary condition of the District for the year 1897.

### ZYMOTIC DISEASES.

The number of notifiable diseases reported to me amounted to 98, and the non-notifiable infectious diseases brought to my notice, by enquiry or otherwise, amounted to 90. The former consisted of the following, viz.:—Scarlatina, 59; Croup, 3; Enteric Fever, 12; Puerperal Fever, 5; Erysipelas, 19; and the latter of Measles, 36; and Whooping Cough, 54.

### SCARLATINA.

This disease is not merely a visitor like other zymotic diseases, but may be considered a resident in colliery villages. Excepting in June, when it ceased for a short time, only however to restart from where it had apparently ended, its appearance was continuous in one or more villages from January to December. Although the disease was thrice imported, isolation was successfully carried out on each occasion. The rest of the cases were invariably traceable to the original outbreak. Spreading the cases over the year showed that it never became epidemic.

### CROUP.

The cases were of a doubtful character; none were fatal, and no infection was carried to others.

## PUERPERAL FEVER.

It is somewhat difficult to say whether the cases were of a specific type or not. The fact, however, remains, that not one case was the product of the other. All severe febrile attacks in the puerperal state are evidently reported.

## ERYSIPELAS.

Nineteen cases were notified, a rather large order, considering that not one case was the offspring of the other.

## ENTERIC OR TYPHOID FEVER.

The cases notified were twelve, and the dates with the localities are as follows, viz.; one case at Flint Hill in April; one each at Catchgate and Pontop Rows in May; in August one at Annfield Plain; in September two at Dipton; two at Annfield Plain and one at South Medomsley; one at Wood Houses in October; in November one at Lily Cottages and one at Annfield Plain. In the first place, two cases, both belonging to Annfield Plain, ought to be, in my opinion, eliminated from the above list. Their attack was of too short a duration for genuine Typhoid Fever. The origin of four cases could be accounted for—one arrived at Annfield Plain with the disease developed; another followed from direct contact. Two separate cases at Dipton were infected in the same manner, but neither the initial cases nor any of the others could be accounted for. Admittance to the Fever Hospital, with easy removal by covered Ambulance, was offered to every suitable case and not one accepted the offer made them.

MEASLES were imported into South Medomsley in January, and spread to the villages immediately adjoining, finally ceasing in April. Considering the time it infested the district, the cases were not so numerous as might have been expected, and on no occasion did it show any indication of becoming epidemic. Not being on the list of notifiable diseases, in all probability there were many more cases than the number mentioned.

WHOOPIING COUGH entered the same villages almost simultaneously with the preceding disease, spreading to the same villages and ceasing in the same month. It is generally considered, as a natural course of things, that children should have Measles and Whooping Cough, consequently when an outbreak occurs of either disease not the slightest precautions are taken

to prevent it spreading. The healthy have unrestricted access to the diseased. Children are also sent to school from an infected house, and in some instances, by the advice of the Attendance Officer, notwithstanding orders to the contrary. Parents have not realised the fact that more children succumb to Whooping Cough than any other infectious disease. Measles also claims a large share of victims.

### VITAL STATISTICS.

The number of births registered during the year amounted to 430, and the deaths to 196. The birth-rate is equal to 37·4, the death-rate to 17 per 1000, estimating the population at 11,500.

It will be seen that the births more than double the deaths, and judging from the percentage of both, it is more than likely that the population is here under-estimated.

The deaths from infectious diseases were 15, being as follows, viz., Enteric Fever, 1 ; Puerperal Fever, 1 ; Measles, 2 ; Whooping Cough, 10 ; and Diarrhœa 1 ; total 15, being equal to about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the whole deaths.

The Infantile Mortality was unusually high, 76 deaths occurred under one year, being over one-third of the whole, and by adding twenty under the ages of one and five years, gives half the total mortality under the age of five years. On the other hand, between the ages of five and twenty-five, the death list is a fairly light one, and the same may be said up to sixty years of age. Preventable disease plays only a small part in this excessive infantile mortality, only seven deaths as regards children under the age of one year were due to those causes.

### INSPECTOR'S DEPARTMENT.

NEW HOUSES.—48 new houses were built and occupied during the year, having their sanitary requirements completed to your orders. Their localities and the number erected at each place are as follows, viz., 22 at Annfield Plain ; 13 at Catchgate ; 11 at Dipton ; and 3 at Kyo. 32 were self-contained, the remaining 17 consisted of two tenements each.

OLD PROPERTY.—Practically every house in the district presenting any appearance of being defective was examined and all defects noted. The number of houses that needed—and several still need—repairing, either with or without structural

changes, is stated on the list following—Annfield Plain, 6 ; Catchgate, 10 ; Dipton 27 ; South Medomsley, 6 ; Hill Top, 4 ; White-le-Head, 9 ; Kyo, 20 ; total, 82.

Action was taken under the "Housing of the Working Class Act" in the case of six houses at Dipton, one at Kyo, and three at Hill Top, that resulted in permanently closing two houses at the last mentioned village, and restoring the remainder into habitable condition.

**OUT-OFFICES.**—All Out-Offices attached to houses undergoing repairs were also attended to at the same time. Six out-offices in connection with old property have either been reconstructed upon an improved model, or converted into water closets. There are however a large number of open privy-middens, and other kinds of imperfect structures, that are decidedly objectionable and may possibly prove harmful in the event of an outbreak of Typhoid Fever. They might be gradually eliminated by insisting on reconstruction in lieu of ordinary repairs whenever delapidations occur.

**SEWERS.**—To complete the drainage of the district only new sewers are required to South Medomsley, Wood Houses, and a small portion of both Kyo and Flint Hill.

**SEWAGE.**—Better systems for the treatment of sewage than the existing ones will in time need to be adopted. At present the outfall from Greencroft, Loud, Wood Houses, and South Medomsley flows upon land (imperfect broad irrigation), and is somewhat of a nuisance.

The combined sewer from the villages of Dipton, Flint Hill, and Hill Top, empties into the outfall tanks at Dipton, but the sewage undergoes no treatment beyond settlement of the solids. Works of a moderate design were constructed at Kyo for that portion of the district, including Annfield Plain and the surrounding drainable area. The system in use at the works is that known as Chemical Precipitation with Filtration, but it has not been so markedly successful as it was anticipated. The effluent is occasionally unsatisfactory, and should there be any increase of sewage some alterations or additions will be required. The village of White-le-Head is divided between two districts, and the sewage from that portion belonging to your Board flows into and is efficiently treated in the adjoining one. The drainage from small blocks of property will be attached where practicable to the existing centres.

SCAVENGING.—The work in this department, on the whole, has been exceedingly well done.

REFUSE REMOVAL.—The coal owners, who are the large proprietors, recognise their responsibility. The refuse is removed by their own workmen in a fairly satisfactory manner. The small proprietors on the other hand are frequently in default and give no end of trouble to your Inspector. If your Council took over this branch of sanitary work it would be a great boon to the inhabitants.

WATER SUPPLY.—The water supplied by the Consett Water Company is both good and abundant and is used by every householder, excepting in a few isolated instances where suitable wells exist, and these are under observation in case they should fail in dry weather. For the occupiers' convenience water was laid into about thirty houses.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES were kept in good order.

LODGING HOUSES.—There are three premises used as lodging houses—two are licensed and are kept in good order, the other should be licensed or closed.

No prosecution was necessary under the Food and Drugs' Act. Over one hundred notices were served for the removal of petty nuisances, but no legal proceedings were taken in any instance.

Neither cowsheds or dairies have been visited.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

T. BENSON,

Medical Officer.

*The Urban District Council,  
Annfield Plain.*

(A)

TABLE of DEATHS during the Year 1897, in the Annfield Plain Urban District, Classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

| MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES. |               |                |                 |                  |                  |                 |
|---|---------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| At all Ages.                                  | Under 1 year. | 1 and under 5. | 5 and under 15. | 15 and under 25. | 25 and under 65. | 65 and upwards. |
| 196   | 76            | 20             | 4               | 8                | 50               | 38              |

| MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE. |                     |            |          |                 |                         |           |                                      |                |           |                     |        |
|---|---------------------|------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------------|--------|
| AGES.   | FEVERS.             |            | Measles. | Whooping Cough. | Diarrhoea and Dysentry. | Phthisis. | Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy. | Heart Disease. | Injuries. | All other Diseases. | Total. |
|   | Euteric or Typhoid. | Puerperal. |          |                 |                         |           |                                      |                |           |                     |        |
| Under 5   | ...                 | ...        | 2        | 10              | 1                       | ..        | 14                                   | 2              | ...       | 67                  | 96     |
| 5 upwards   | 1                   | 1          | ...      | ...             | ...                     | 15        | 12                                   | 11             | 3         | 57                  | 100    |

(B)

TABLE of POPULATION, BIRTHS, and of NEW CASES of INFECTIOUS SICKNESS, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1897.

| POPULATION AT ALL AGES. |                              |                    | Aged under 5 or over 5. | NEW CASES OF SICKNESS IN EACH LOCALITY, COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH. |                   |         |     |             |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------|---------|-----|-------------|
| Last Census.            | Estimated to middle of 1897. | Registered Births. |                         | Scarlatina.   | Membranous Group. | FEVERS. |     | Erysipelas. |
|                         |                              |                    | Under 5                 | 32  | 3                 | ...     | ... | ...         |
| 9837                    | 11500                        | 430                | 5 upwards               | 27  | ...               | 12      | 5   | 19          |

AREA AND POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT TO WHICH THIS RETURN RELATES.

|  |   |   |   |   |         |
|--|---|---|---|---|---------|
| Area in Acres                            | - | - | - | - | 3,475.  |
| Population (last Census)                 | - | - | - | - | 9,837.  |
| Population (estimated to middle of 1897) | - | - | - | - | 11,500. |

DEATH RATES—

|                                |   |   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| General                        | - | 17 per 1,000 population, estimated to middle of 1897. |
| Infant (under one year of age) | - | 174.4 per 1,000 Births Registered.                    |

THOMAS BENSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

February 10th, 1898.